

The NORTHWEST AIRLIFTER

McChord Air Force Base, Wash.

Connecting Team McChord with the Combat Airlift Mission

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Rodeo 2007

approaches the finish line



Weekend Weather

FRIDAY



Hi: 80
Low: 55

SATURDAY



Hi: 75
Low: 55

SUNDAY



Hi: 75
Low: 54

Forecast generated at 7 a.m. Thursday
Courtesy of the 62nd Operations Support Squadron

Mission accomplished

Total McChord sorties	9,783
Total flying hours	33,326.5
Cargo moved (tons)	73,143.8
Departure reliability rate	94.7%
Mission capable rate	84%
Personnel currently deployed	707
Reservists currently activated.....	209
(Jan. 1 to Tuesday. Numbers updated Tuesday.)	

Don't miss it ... MPF closure

The military personnel flight will be closed from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Monday due to the 62nd Mission Support Group change-of-command ceremony at 9:30 a.m. in Hangar 3.

Thanks for a successful Rodeo

By
Col. Jerry Martinez
62nd Airlift Wing commander

Wow, what a week!
Months of hard work have really paid off, as Team McChord and more than 3,000 visiting competitors, staff members and guests have enjoyed this year's Rodeo events.
If you've been anywhere near Heritage Hill lately, you definitely know Rodeo is here. Where once just a grassy hill stood, there's now an entire tent city for the massive mobility competition that began here a week ago. From the arrival of the teams to the fun evenings at Rainier Ranch (and all the challenging competitions in between), Rodeo 2007 has been a huge success.
That success is due in no small part to you, Team McChord. You worked the extra hours and went the extra mile to ensure this year's Rodeo was the best ever. Every general officer, every distinguished visitor and every civic leader has told me how impressed they are with the work you've done and has asked me to pass on their appreciation.
So thanks Team McChord, for showing such amazing pride in your base and in your work and for making Rodeo 2007 a first-class event.
While much of our focus has been on hosting Rodeo, our 62nd Airlift Wing team has been hard at work training and preparing for this week. Of course, the major award winners will be announced later today at the closing celebration. Whether or not we keep some trophies here at home, I'm already incredibly proud of our team.
My continued thanks to everyone who is working hard to ensure this Rodeo goes down in the record books as one of the best!



From left, Col. Jerry Martinez, 62nd Airlift Wing commander; Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command commander; and Brig. Gen. Kip Self, Rodeo 2007 commander; ride horseback Sunday before Rodeo's opening ceremony at McChord.

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62ND AIRLIFT WING, MCCORD AFB, WASHINGTON

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Rodeo first rate

Competition successful, friendly as teams find stride

By

Airman 1st Class Kirsten Wicker

62nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs

Air Mobility Command’s Rodeo 2007 hit full stride this week as the event proved challenging and rewarding for all those involved. McChord, international and U.S. teams worked extremely well, roping success and forming friendships throughout the intense competition, according to Rodeo officials.

“There is a lot of camaraderie between military members from all over the world because we have all had similar training,” said Lt. Col. Bryan Huntsman, Rodeo director. “We are all here for friendly competition, but it’s also an intense competition, so there is a natural sense of understanding [between teams].”

The judging for this year’s Rodeo actually began July 16, when international teams were judged on their landings here. The events continued Saturday with the arrival of U.S. teams, who were judged on their landings, then whisked away to compete in the Fit-to-Fight event.

“Rodeo is going smoothly and fantastically,” said Colonel Huntsman. “The McChord staff are doing an excellent job.”

The flying events began Monday, and while Rodeo teams were out each day, McChord Airmen demonstrated that their strength lies in teamwork and a little hustle.

“The support staff have been hard at work and have done a tremendous job so far,” said aeromed-



Rodeo wranglers post scores for Rodeo 2007 events at Rainier Ranch Monday. The scoreboard is updated after each event.

ical evacuation Rodeo planner, Master Sgt. J.P. Wirth. “The behind-the-scenes tasks have made everything seamless.”

Tech. Sgt. Jason Hall, a competitor from the 55th Air Refueling Wing at Altus Air Force Base, Okla., agreed.

“Everything is going so well because we are at McChord. It is a first-rate competition with a first-rate staff. The competition is friendly and fun, and

things are so smooth thanks to the hard work McChord’s Airmen have put into Rodeo.”

Now at Rodeo’s end with the closing celebrations taking place today, the event’s success will be judged not by wins or losses, but by partnerships, shared practices and the improved mobility strength that will aid future generations by providing the critical means for humanitarian and warfighting missions, Colonel Huntsman said.



Civic leaders get firsthand look at Rodeo

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

More than 50 local civic leaders and visiting guests from Air Mobility Command bases around the nation took part in a tour of McChord Tuesday to watch Rodeo activities.

The tour was designed to give civic leaders a taste of what goes on here during Rodeo, said public affairs officer Bud McKay, 62nd Airlift Wing.

“They support us day in and day out, so we wanted to get them out here and show them what all the ‘yee haw-ing’ is about this week,” Mr. McKay said.

The visitors had the opportunity to see two Rodeo competitions and experience a convoy demonstration by the 62nd Security Forces and Logistics Readiness Squadrons.

At the first stop, they gathered around the open tail of a C-17 Globemaster III to watch an aeromedical unit from the 446th Airlift Wing compete against the clock to configure the aircraft for a medevac flight.

“That was pretty neat because I’d never seen something like that before,” said civic leader and retired colonel, Joe Tucker. “It was interesting to see the enthusiasm involved with the competition.”



Master Sgt. Mike Keeler, 62nd Security Forces Squadron, briefs civic leaders Tuesday just south of the base runway on the experiences deployed Airmen have while performing convoy duty.

After viewing the aeromedical competition, the visitors were bussed to a staging area where they suited up in 25-pound flak vests and helmets for a demonstra-

tion of what it’s like on a real convoy in Iraq.

“We want to give you guys a firsthand account of what our Airmen are dealing with down range,”

Master Sgt. Mike Keeler, 62nd SFS, told the visitors before they reboarded the bus.

Colonel Tucker said wearing the vest helped bring the demonstration closer to home.

“I hadn’t worn a flak vest since the Vietnam War,” he said. “They’re a bit heavier now.”

Surrounded by Humvees from the front and the rear, the buses traveled to a wilderness area south of the runway, along the way encountering detonating simulated improvised explosive devices and enemy insurgents firing at the bus.

After arriving at an open field, the visitors were treated to another interactive demonstration and got a chance to shake hands and meet the Airmen participating.

The last stop gave the civic leaders a chance to watch Airmen perform an engine-running combat off-load of a C-5 Galaxy.

Visitors also had the option to get a more personal view of Rodeo as the bus dropped everyone off at Rainier Ranch to conclude the tour.

At the ranch, they had the opportunity to snack on appetizers, talk to the international competitors and visit their tents.

The entire experience was enlightening and gave visitors a feel for Rodeo and the challenges Airmen face while deployed, said one of the civic leaders.



Convoy demonstration puts visitors in Airmen's shoes

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

A bus rumbles down the dirt road, plowing through a cloud of dust created by the Humvees leading the convoy. A sudden explosion and bursts of gunfire bring the convoy to an abrupt stop. When the action subsides, two insurgents lay on the side of the road next to a sport-utility vehicle.

Such was the scene Tuesday as more than 50 civic leaders from the local area and Air Mobility Command bases around the nation got the chance to experience a demonstration simulating a convoy trip in Iraq. The demonstration, just south of the base runway, was provided by the 62nd Security Forces and Logistics Readiness Squadrons.

It provided a couple of examples of what Airmen working convoy duty are going through on a daily basis in Iraq, said Master Sgt. Mike Keeler, 62nd Security Forces Squadron.

Every Airman participating in the demonstration had been deployed at one time or another in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, Sergeant Keeler said.

He said he wanted to give the civic leaders a taste of what's going on in deployed environments.

The convoy featured simulated improvised explosive device detonations and Airmen posing as insurgents fired blanks at the convoy.

"When I saw the IEDs exploding, it really put a lump in my throat," said Carlene Joseph, a visitor representing Harborstone Credit Union who sat on the lead bus.

Each visitor got the chance to wear a 25-pound flak vest and helmet during the ride, adding to the realism of the experience.

"The gear is to show the weight the troops are dealing with ... and that's without adding another 25 pounds of ammunition," Sergeant Keeler said.

He also encouraged the visitors to take into account the 100-plus



Photos by 1st Lt. Erika Yepsen

degree temperatures the troops deal with, in addition to carrying the weight of a vest and ammunition.

Throughout several stops on the convoy, the host Airmen made it a point to illustrate the different procedures and strategies that go into getting the convoy and the transported goods to where they need to be in one piece. After each action sequence, Tech. Sgt. Gregory Howell, 62nd LRS, explained how Airmen in the convoy react to each situation.

"Communication is key when it comes to the convoy," Sergeant Howell said after the Airmen manning the guns on top of the Humvees fended off the insurgents.

"If a vehicle gets its engine or tires shot and can't go on, our number one priority is to make sure we don't leave anyone behind."

After arriving at a remote location south of the runway, visitors got off the buses and watched another convoy simulation featuring insurgents charging out of the brush, a suicide bomber and a combat lifesaver rescue.

The action-packed demonstration left an impression on the wide-eyed visitors.

"It was pretty realistic being up so close to the big guns mounted on the Humvees," said a visiting civic leader. "It's amazing what our troops are doing each day."

(Above) Master Sgt. Mike Keeler, 62nd Security Forces Squadron, speaks to civic leaders here Tuesday before a convoy demonstration as part of Rodeo 2007.

(Below) The simulated convoy demonstration in action.



Airmen save the day for Turkey's Rodeo team

By
Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel
Air Mobility Rodeo 2007 Public Affairs

When Turkey's C-130H airplane broke down just before the 2007 Air Mobility Command Rodeo competition began, American Airmen banded together to make the impossible happen. When all was said and done, a maintenance job that normally takes weeks to accomplish was performed in five days, all in the spirit of Rodeo competition.

Trouble began for the Turkish team immediately upon arrival at McChord. Noticing some loose metal shavings during the post-flight inspection, Turkish maintainers troubleshot their jet. What they found was devastating. One of the largest parts of the engine, the reduction gear box, was broken. Since the gear box is the mechanism that turns the propellers, the team was grounded, or so they thought.

Enter Capt. Eric Peterson, a pilot from the 10th Airlift Squadron here and one of the Turkish team's hosts. "Without him, we would not be flying in the competition," said Capt. Umit Saydan, a navigator with the Turkish team.

Since McChord is a C-17 Globemaster III base, there aren't any C-130 parts in stock. So Captain Peterson immediately went to work trying to find

a new reduction gear box, all the necessary ancillary parts and tools needed for the job.

While all this was going on, the Turkish team was starting to feel cursed.

Every international team is allowed a familiarization flight in the days leading up to the competition. Since Turkey's airplane was grounded, the team was offered a ride with a local C-17 crew. But that also fell through — again owing to maintenance issues.

"We thought we needed a medicine man," Captain Saydan joked.

The Turkish aircrew finally got their familiarization flight when their plane was fixed a day before Rodeo kicked off. Much of this was thanks to the efforts of Tech. Sgt. Tre Woodward, who was one of two maintenance liaisons from the 446th Airlift Wing who worked grueling hours with the Turkish team to replace the gear box.

"I've got new respect for these guys," Sergeant Woodward said. "They're hard workers — persistent and professional."

It was also apparent that the bond forged between the maintainers went beyond the professional level.

"They've treated me like family," he said. "We eat every meal together — no one ever eats alone. We've exchanged e-mails, and we plan to stay in contact when the competition is over."

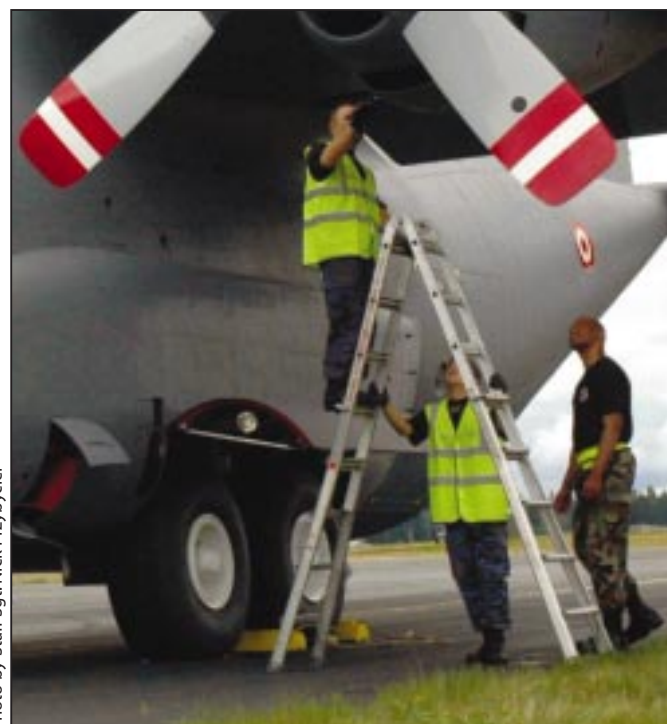


Photo by Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel

Tech. Sgt. Tre Woodward, right, 446th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, performs one final check of Turkey's C-130E Hercules before its first flight at the Air Mobility Command Rodeo 2007.

'ROUND THE RANGE

Memorable moments from Rodeo 2007



Photo by Abner Guzman

Col. Jerry Martinez, 62nd Airlift Wing commander, greets Saudi Arabia Rodeo team members July 16 after their arrival to McChord.



Photo by Abner Guzman

Wranglers help members of the Saudi Arabia Rodeo team unload a luggage pallet July 16 after its arrival to McChord.



Photo by Master Sgt. Richard Cassidy

C-130 Hercules aircraft from various U.S. and international teams park at McChord Saturday.



Photo by Master Sgt. Ken Bergmann

German air force navigator Capt. Claus Gaertner and members of his flight crew review routes and timing July 19 with their liaison officer, Capt. Brad White, 10th Airlift Squadron.

(Below) From left, Gen. Duncan McNabb, Air Mobility Command commander; Brig. Gen. Kip Self, Rodeo commander; Brig. Gen. Eric Crabtree, 446th Airlift Wing commander; and Colonel Martinez salute the colors presented by Mandy West, a member of the Tacoma Lariattes, during Rodeo's opening ceremonies Sunday.



Photo by Senior Airman Clay Lancaster

Republic of South Korea Capt. Se Won Park attempts to lasso a plastic calf Sunday at Rainier Ranch.



Photo by Master Sgt. Russell Cooley IV

A pallet is released out of the back of a U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules during an air cargo drop Tuesday.

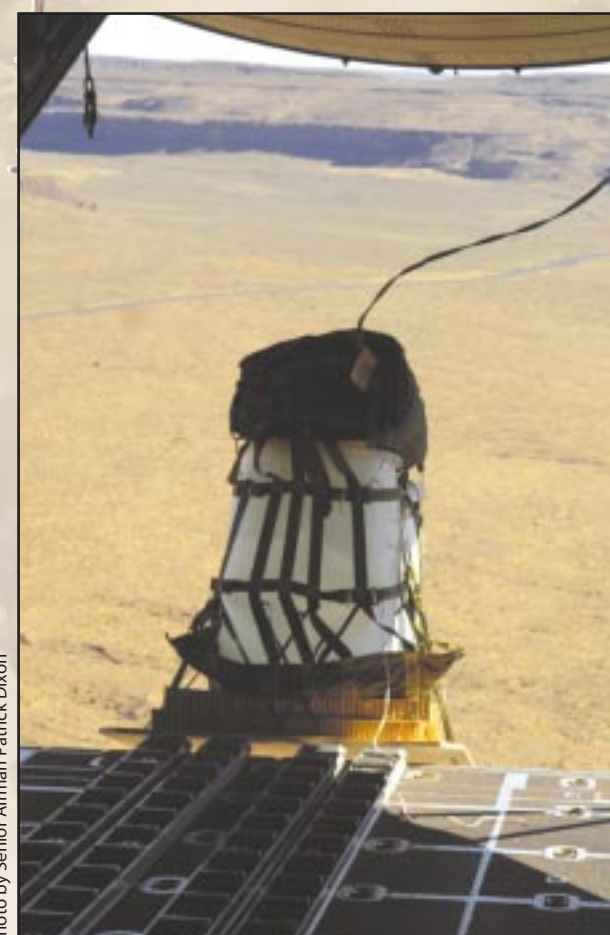


Photo by Senior Airman Patrick Dixon

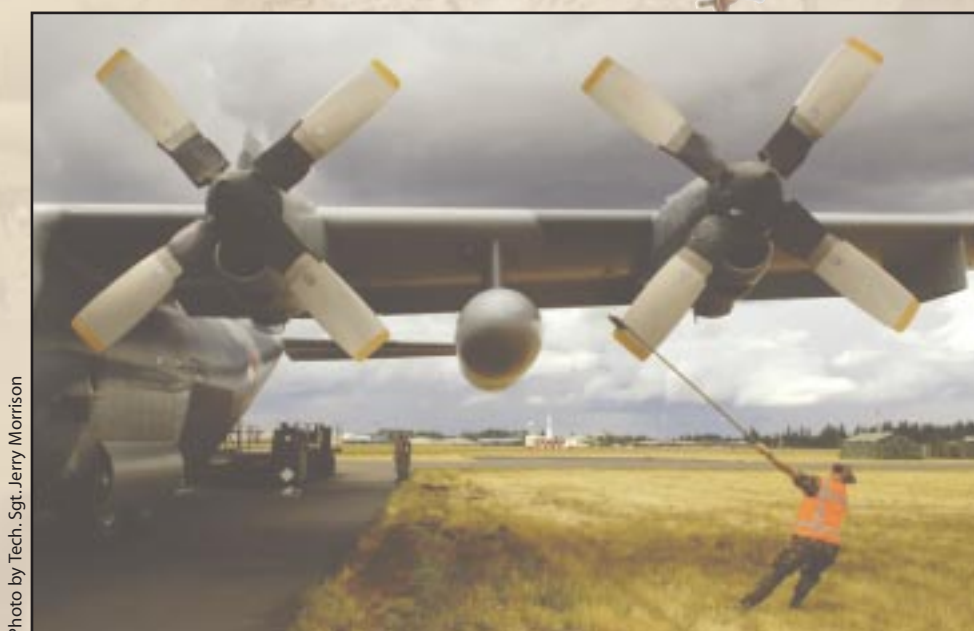


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Jerry Morrison

A Royal Netherlands air force crew chief positions the props of his team's C-130 Hercules after a practice sortie prior to the kickoff of Rodeo.



Photo by Abner Guzman

Staff Sgt. Stephen Green, 916th Security Forces Squadron, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., takes cover Monday while protecting civilians from simulated enemy fire during the security forces tactics event.

PURE ENERGY



Photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet

Airmen from the 62nd Airlift Wing perform sit-ups Saturday during the Fit-To-Fight portion of Air Mobility Command's Rodeo 2007.

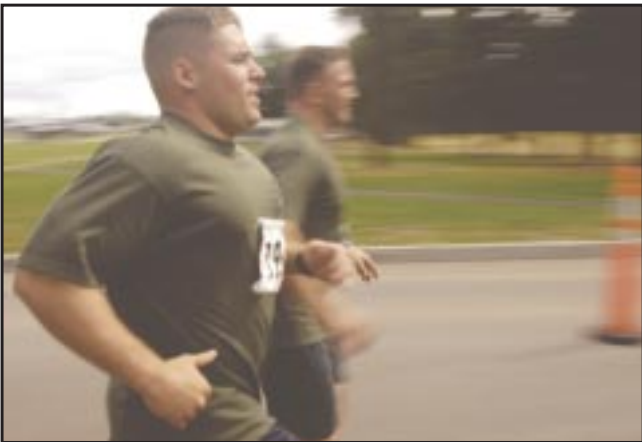


Photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet

Marines from Miramar, Calif., run the 1.5-mile course during the Fit-To-Fight competition.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Samuel Bendet

A spectator cheers on a teammate from Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., during the fitness portion of Rodeo.



Photo by Senior Airman Clay Lancaster

Belgian Air Force adjutant Bernard Gilson waits at the entrance of the fitness competition.

Congrats

62nd Airlift Wing on winning the Fit-to-Fight competition

Rodeo participants start event with fitness-minded competition

By
Tyler Hemstreet
Staff writer

Air Mobility Command Rodeo 2007 competitors got an up-close-and-physical introduction to the event Saturday as the teams competed in the Fit-to-Fight competition.

The event ran smoothly and no one suffered serious injuries, said Fit-to-Fight coordinator Patrick Conway, 62nd Medical Operations Squadron.

"A few people got sick because they ran so hard, but overall people were pretty happy with [their performances]," Mr. Conway said.

The overcast weather and proper hydration played a big role in

everyone avoiding serious injuries, he said.

There were some initial concerns that there would be bottlenecks at portions of the running course due to the fact so many teams were participating, but it never materialized, Mr. Conway said.

"I think the international teams really liked it," Mr. Conway said.

Each Fit-to-Fight 10-person team was selected by Rodeo officials at random to participate in the competition.

McChord's 62nd Maintenance Group team member Tech. Sgt. Ron Robinette said he was excited about participating once he found out he'd been selected.

"One of the first things we did three months ago was start training for the Fit-to-Fight competition so

that we'd be ready if we were picked," Sergeant Robinette said. "I wanted my name to be on that list."

The 62nd MXG team got a little extra motivation during the push-up and sit-up portion of the competition because a team of Marines was competing on the other side of the canopy, he said.

"You could hear them yelling at their guys, and we were yelling at our guys, so it definitely added some extra motivation to everything," Sergeant Robinette said.

The team dug deep to finish strong because of the extra attention brought on by being the host base, he said. It helped push each member of the 62nd MXG team to improve their run times by nearly a minute, Sergeant Robinette said.

"I wanted to run as fast as I

could to represent for McChord," Sergeant Robinette said.

For Staff Sgt. Clayton Greenwell, a member of the 62nd Security Forces Squadron team, the Fit-to-Fight competition was finally a chance to compete against opponents outside of their own ranks, as they had during training.

"It makes you hungrier when you see those other teams out there," Sergeant Greenwell said.

In fact, Sergeant Greenwell said he had to pace himself out of the gate because the adrenaline and excitement gave him such a big boost.

"All the training made everything easier and helped build my endurance," he said. "But when I was done, I was beat. I ran as hard as I could."

Cultures blend together at Rodeo 2007

Participants draw from global life-experiences

By
Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel
Air Mobility Rodeo 2007 Public Affairs

On the outside, the United Arab Emirates' tent looks just like the 20-or-so others dotting Rainier Ranch, the off-duty area for the 2007 Air Mobility Command Rodeo competition.

But the similarities end when the front flap of the olive-green tent is opened. In a scene that could best be summarized as an Arabian bazaar meets Western bling-bling, two worlds — and strong mobility partners — effortlessly blend together inside.

Persian rugs, decorative lamps and a wall lined with Arabian cushions are contrasted by the human element, most notably the younger members of the UAE Rodeo team. Chatting on cell phones, they could fit in at any American shopping mall had they not been wearing their UAE military uniforms.

Cultural fusion is an integral part of Rodeo, where nations from all over the world come together to share airlift tactics and strengthen interpersonal bonds.

"Each team brings in a part of their culture to share with us. All of the international partners are vital — it all goes to relationship building," said Bruce Balbin, AMC international relations advisor.

"We're here for the experience — to get to know other people from different nations so we can plan for the next few [Rodeo] competitions," said Maj.

Jamal Al Awani, commander of the UAE team.

Although Major Al Awani — a C-130H Hercules pilot for 14 years — has flown combat airlift missions side-by-side with Airmen from the U.S. Air Force in Afghanistan, he noted that many in his crew are new to a multicultural mission.

"This is a big experience for all the crew, but especially for the new members," he said.

If history is any indication of how successfully teams from different countries have implemented lessons they've learned at Rodeo, then the UAE may have a lot to look forward to.

At Rodeo 2005, teams from the United States, Brazil, France and the United Kingdom worked together to teach the Pakistan team about airlift mission procedures and standards.

"Pakistan had never done a combat off-load or engine running off-load and they asked us how we do it and what kind of timing is needed," said Chief Magno Ney, Brazilian team veteran.

"We learned a lot from the previous Rodeo working with the other teams, and this year we are competing in those events," said Lt. Col. Rizvi Mazha, Pakistan wing commander.

Competition is often tough at Rodeo and rivalries sometimes arise, but the reason for the international event is to create better airlift capabilities.

"We already had airlift procedures before coming to Rodeo, but working with others, we found our weaknesses, corrected them and then implemented the changes," Colonel Mazhar said.

Aside from presenting the opportunity to hone combat airlift skills, Rodeo is a venue where cultures come together on the human scale. At the end of each day's competitions, Rainier Ranch becomes a giant cultural blender, where teams from all over the world get together.

(Senior Airman Desiree Kiliz contributed to this story.)



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel

Maj. Jamal Al Awani, left, United Arab Emirates Rodeo team commander, talks with Maj. John Caplinger, a pilot from the 10th Airlift Squadron, at the UAE tent at Rainier Ranch recently. The UAE team is competing in its Rodeo competition.



Planners keep premier airlift competition flying

By

Staff Sgt. Nick Przybyciel

Air Mobility Rodeo 2007 Public Affairs

On a grey Pacific Northwest morning in the middle of July, McChord resembled a European airfield at the height of the Berlin Airlift.

While the operations tempo for the base has been high for the past several years, the influx of competition aircraft dwarfs its normal pace.

“As far as an Air Force base goes, nothing comes close to this,” said Lt. Col. Scott Lavigne, the head operations planner for the competition.

Nearly 50 aircraft representing airlift and tanker planes touched down at a rate of one every five minutes for more than four hours Saturday as American teams joined international competitors for Air Mobility Command’s Rodeo 2007 competition here.

In an office not too far from the arrival action, some of the Air Force’s sharpest logisticians coordinated the effort, staring intently at a cryptic, rainbow-colored matrix printed on a sheet sprawled across three desks. When the last aircraft were parked, the group of planners finally got a break from the onslaught. However, it proved to be only a temporary reprieve.

At Rodeo, teams from all over the

world compete in events to see who has the best combat airlift capabilities. Nearly every aspect of flying and support is tested. Aircrews are put through a litany of tests — including a low-level airdrop — to see who is best of the best. Keeping everything running with clock-like precision is the job of Colonel Lavigne and the rest of his team. There is no leeway built into the scoring system for an error made by the planners.

“Since everything relies on the previous time, it can create a snowball effect,” Colonel Lavigne said.

“There’s a tremendous amount of communication with the Federal Aviation Administration and area airports. They need to know the rules of our competition so they don’t delay our competitors’ flight times and get them ‘dinged’ on points,” Colonel Lavigne said.

Tracking such a unique mission requires specially designed software, created specifically for Rodeo. Since the system AMC uses to track tactical missions is geared strictly towards tracking air operations, a new one had to be developed to cover both the ground and air events that happen at Rodeo.

At the 2005 Rodeo, one of McChord’s Rodeo coordinators, Lt. Col. Mike Mattinson, decided that it was time to develop a system specifically for the competition. A C-17 Globemaster III instructor pilot by



Senior Airman Christian Recene, 62nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, marshals a C-130 Hercules from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, Saturday during its arrival at McChord for Rodeo 2007.

trade, Colonel Mattinson said he has spent the better part of the last 10 years tinkering with his office software, teaching himself a bit of programming along the way.

As a result, he has become a point-man for the command’s top brass when it comes to figuring out office technology. For this year’s competition, Colonel Mattinson crafted new software from scratch. New features, such as a “rainbow” summary that gives coordinators an

effective visual of all assets, missions and flight times are included.

“It’s a good system. There’s a lot of versatility,” said Capt. Lisa Pierce, one of the people Colonel Lavigne recruited to be part of his team.

The fact that Captain Pierce has no complaints bodes well for her. For the duration of the weeklong competition, Captain Pierce and her fellow planners will spend at least 12 hours per day working to keep the sky and ground organized here.

